

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

May 10, 2004

The Honorable Ernest Istook, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Treasury and Independent Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
2358 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Olver, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Treasury and Independent Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Istook and Ranking Member Olver:

We write to express our strong support for a one-time federal appropriation of \$2 million to implement the Washington State Produce Rail Car Program.

This appropriation would be combined with Washington state funding to restore and refurbish a fleet of refrigerated rail cars to support the rail movement of apples, potatoes, onions, pears, and other perishable commodities from the field to distant markets. Once started, this program will be self-financing through fees charged to the users of the service. Last year, the Washington State Legislature approved a new law to authorize the Washington State Department of Transportation to manage this initiative.

Over the last few years, Washington produce growers and shippers have been losing their railroad service, and now do not have enough refrigerated railcars to meet their needs. Absent an innovative approach, like the Rail Car Program, the problem will continue to grow more severe to the detriment of our Washington farmers.

The Rail Car Program will provide a critical boost to Washington's agriculture economy, and is a wise investment in our region's transportation infrastructure. Your consideration of support for this initiative is greatly appreciated.

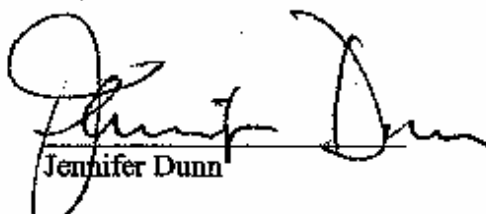
Sincerely,

  
Doc Hastings

  
Rick Larsen

  
George R. Nethercutt, Jr.

  
Adam Smith

  
Jennifer Dunn

  
Jim McDermott

  
Jay Inslee

  
Norman Dicks

  
Brian Baird